

THE ROLE OF ARCHITECTURE IN ESTABLISHING A SENSE OF REFUGE IN A STATE OF DISTRESS

architecture for
CRISIS

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(www.images-2.redbubble.net)



(www.scrapetv.com)

ABSTRACT



The senses
(www.meltingcrayons.wordpress.com)



Rupture
(www.worthwhile.com)



Despair
(www.deviantart.net)



Loss of self
(www.jbrabin.com)



'The Scream' by Edvard Munch
(www.paintinghere.com)

A keen interest in the way buildings are experienced at a core level of existence and how they shape our perception of the world around us is the inspiration behind this thesis. The idea of architecture as refuge and shelter is central in designing a Crisis Care Centre (CCC). In responding to the effects of rape and abuse, there is a need to understand what it is about designing a building that evokes a sense of safety for those who would be arriving in a state of trauma.

The concept of a place of safety for the wounded and the afflicted goes beyond the man-made boundaries that enclose it. If we delve deeper, we begin to view the building as an experience. This refers more to an architecture that responds to human needs, one which is moving and adjusting with time in order to provide a suitable environment for those who inhabit it. This kind of architecture deals with the delicate balance of form, the careful arrangement of spaces and the thoughtful generation of process which all work together in defining the necessary envisioned encounter between the victim and the CCC.

As humans we locate and understand ourselves through space and time and from this establish a sense of continuity and stability. This leads to the formation of our sense of identity and purpose. When rape occurs, this sense of continuity is broken. The victim's concept of self worth, vitality and dignity is stripped away. In essence one loses his or her 'self' and it seems as if time stands still. This break or rupture within a victim's life requires a process whereby he or she is reminded of all which initially constituted him or her as a healthy, functioning individual. There lies ahead a journey of reconnecting the past and the future and thus re-establishing a sense of continued purpose of one's 'self'. The ultimate purpose of the CCC is to become the vessel out of which this recovery can unfold.

The intention of this thesis is to motivate for an architecture centred on the human experience. It is about uncovering and exploring aspects of how we relate to the world around us through the sensory mechanisms with which we have been created. Each one of us has a unique encounter with our environment. Therefore, an architectural response to our unique image of the world is an immensely subjective matter. Each person has his or her own point of reference from which they view their context and perceive its nature. At the same time, however, there are commonalities that can be drawn from different people's interpretations and responses to external factors. It is these commonalities or primal experiences which I intend on discussing so as to form a conclusion of how one can begin to define buildings which become life giving bodies that promote a journey of healing and restoration.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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DECLARATION

I, Gareth Allan Tresling [0303814H] am a student registered for the course Master of Architecture [Professional] in the year 2009. I hereby declare the following:

I am aware that plagiarism [the use of someone else's work without permission and/or without acknowledging the original sources] is wrong. I confirm that the work submitted for assessment for the above course is my own unaided work except where I have stated explicitly otherwise. I have followed the required conventions in referencing thoughts, ideas, and visual materials of others. For this purpose, I have referred to the Graduate School of Engineering and the Built Environment style guide. I understand that the University of the Witwatersrand may take disciplinary action against me if there is a belief that this is not my unaided work or that I have failed to acknowledge the source of the ideas or words in my own work.

Signature -----

October 2009

1 INTRODUCTION



Alone
(www.scrapetv.com)





Selected Site
(Osmond Lange Architects 2009)

This thesis is rooted in the context of Durban's central suburbia, focusing on the area surrounding King George V Hospital. The intention is to investigate what a well thought out Crisis Care Centre (CCC) could mean to this community and to determine ways in which architectural experiences could maximize its potential for providing a humane and proactive response to rape and abuse. By offering medical, psychological, social, and legal services, the CCC is a key instrument in establishing a sense of refuge and safety in Durban where the fast track society often sees individuals left stranded whilst in distress. Possible ways in which an individual in crisis can have an experience that is positively shaped by the spaces through which he or she traverses, will be explored. This can reinforce his or her perception of protection and identity linked to these spaces.

I believe that it is ultimately our obligation, as architects, to improve the quality of the environment in which society lives. By creating positive perceptions through architectural experiences, we can begin to strive towards the fulfillment of this mandate. The perception of architecture exists at a multitude of levels, and thus it is important to understand how people relate to buildings at various scales. On a macro scale, the way in which a community views the city around it affects its integration into the city.

Unfamiliar images breed mistrust and suspicion. For this reason, it is essential to understand what constitutes the community and its relationship to the city in order to address issues of identity. In viewing the CCC from afar, people must associate notions of security with it, occupying its territory as a beacon of hope within the context of the city. People who are in a state of distress must feel willing and comfortable in approaching the CCC.

People are existential in that they rely on their own senses in order to interpret their world. Through what they see, hear, smell, touch, and taste, they form an opinion of the condition of the environment that surrounds them. Architecture therefore becomes a symbol and a protagonist for change and revitalization by offering a positive experience through time and space.



One's Perception of the World
(www.praguebiennale.org)



Van Gogh's Room
(www.vincentvangoghart.net)

On a micro scale, people relate to details such as material, texture, colour and light. These elements form an intimate part of our lives without us necessarily noticing their effect on our state of being. A material has the potential to lay claim to all of our senses. We may feel the warmth held by large stone pillars, smell the natural scent circulating within a quaint log cabin, see the sun rise on a sheer glass façade, hear the resonance of rain falling over a tin roof and taste the earth in the air of a mud hut.

Colour generates a multitude of moods by either working together in harmony or fighting one another from opposite sides of the spectrum. Light carries with it a spirit, which by its presence or lack thereof holds notions of good and evil, of knowledge, faith and that which transports us into another dimension. On a large scale, formal qualities are of great significance in drawing various reactions from the people that interact with them. These forms can, in some instances, be imposing, foreign and threatening while in others can evoke feelings of safety and refuge.

For a CCC to be effective, one needs to address the experience of architecture at all levels of detail and draw out the potential to evoke safety and refuge. The process of experience thus becomes one of approach, encounter, and memory. Addressing the interface between the CCC and the community will establish a vital first point of contact for incoming traumas. It is crucial that patients have a positive perception of the public healthcare service and that they are able to view the CCC as a place of sanctuary. The balance of space for self-reflection with space for communal healing will be a delicate relationship considering that both settings form crucial stages in dealing with the effects of trauma.

In my opinion, it is important that architects, in general and within this context, design with the intention of restoring faith in humanity within a community. In the case of King George V Hospital in Durban, this faith would relate to the services offered by a Public Healthcare System. For this reason, I would like to learn what the existing CCC at King George V Hospital presently means within its context, and then propose what such a facility could become. This has a far-reaching influence on the regeneration of the community and the revival of this particular part of Durban which, over the past decade, has been subject to ongoing decay.



Kaleidoscope
(www.bindweed.com)

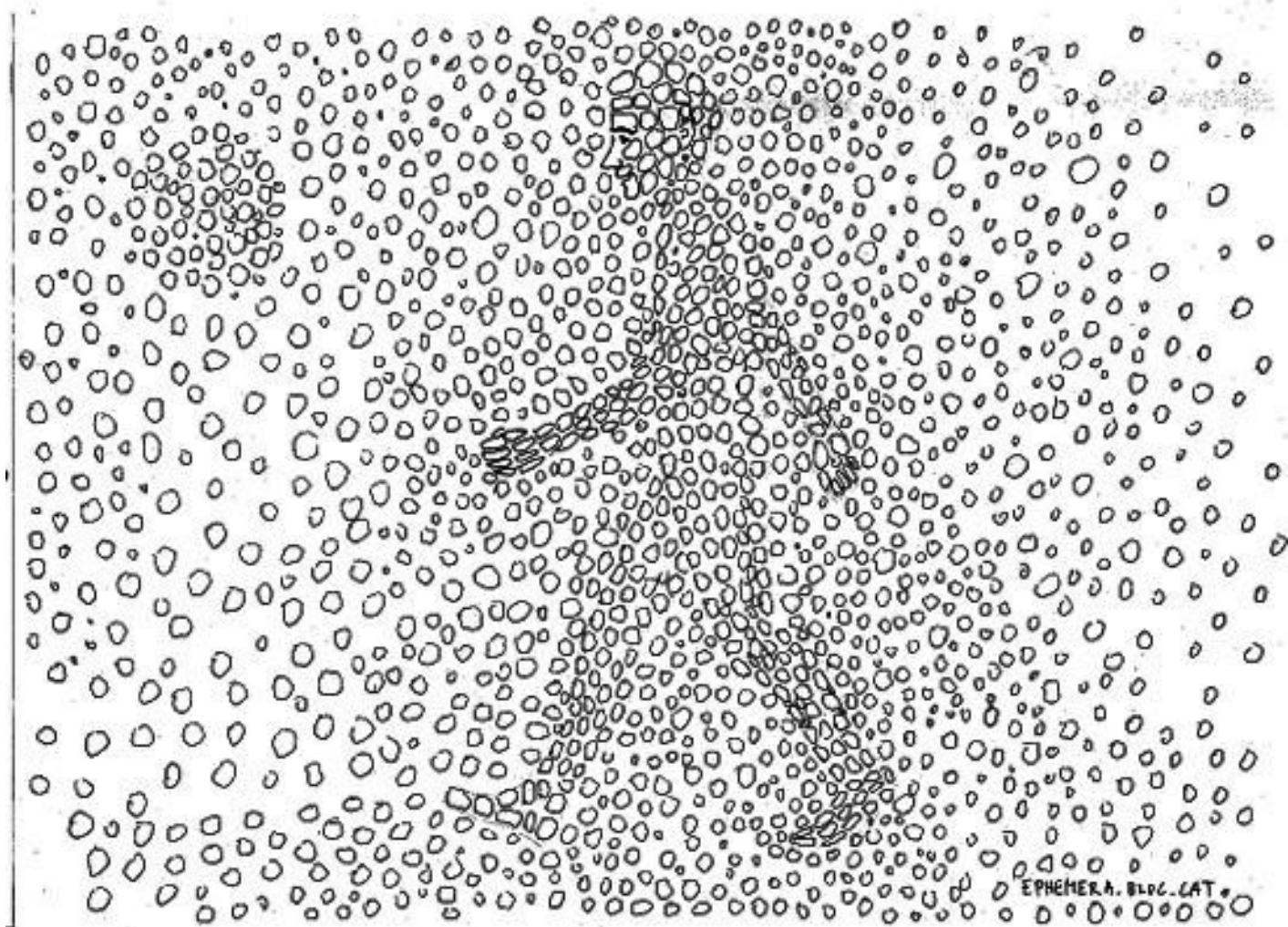


Oculus
(www.archide.wordpress.com)

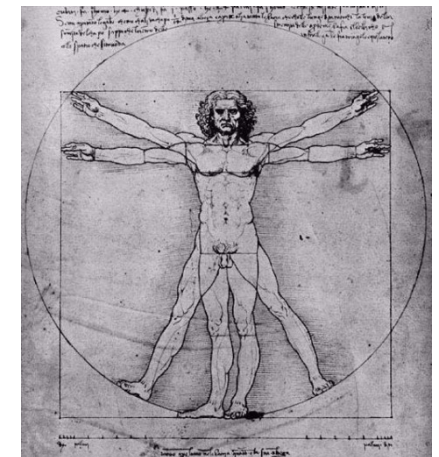
The way in which people interpret space and its various qualities determines their perception of reality. The idea that one man's red could be another man's green holds true in the way people make different associations with spatial and tectonic conditions. I am interested in the patterns and trends revealed through the way people respond to different types of environmental conditions at various scales. Juhani Pallasmaa states the importance of such an endeavor by explaining that,

"The increasing anonymity of building in the industrialized world, and its detachment from the human experience, make one ponder the interaction between the human mind, culture, and building. As contemporary buildings seem to increase our sense of alienation, rather than offer a sense of home, there is good cause for analyzing the fundamental experiences related to buildings through thought and language" (Encounters 2005: 72).

2 OUR IMAGE OF SELF THROUGH TIME



Experiences of space
(www.ephemera.com)



The Vitruvian Man
(www.finearttouch.com)

Body and Identity

The 'body image theory' is a model of perception that provides valuable insight into the way humans identify themselves within space. From the moment we are born, we enter into a three dimensional world, comprising of millions upon millions of experiences of space. All sorts of shapes, materials and sizes characterize these spaces. We begin to interact with the environment through which we traverse, using the tools assigned to us to interpret the world that holds us. We understand space through defining its boundaries. As a fundamental organizational mechanism, our bodies have been created along specific axis. We understand notions of front, back, left and right, through the orientation of the body's elevations. Up and down then generate a third axis of movement, leading to what we know as the Cartesian system. We begin to size objects around us through relating their dimensions, axis and proportions to our own bodies. Bloomer and Moore, in their book 'Body, Image and Architecture' explain that, "The most fundamental organizing principle in the formation of our body image is that we unconsciously locate our bodies inside a three-dimensional boundary" (Kent C Bloomer & Charles W Moore 1977:37).

Objects can either be fixed or they can exhibit life and carry kinetic properties, as is the case when we come into contact with another person. We are essentially confronting another living space which, to the best of our understanding, should carry with it a certain set of characteristics. We are very much aware of our own inner space and the presence of another person's inner space. We define boundaries in order to distinguish what is ours and what belongs to the world around us, or the cosmos.

This body boundary is what defines the internal (personal) and external (extra-personal) space of our bodies. This is a dynamic boundary that depends on events both inside and outside the body. As Sir Isaac Newton put it, "every action has a reaction". With every feeler we put out into the world, we are sure of a response informing us of the



The Body Boundary
(www.k-punk.abstractdynamics.org)



*Interaction between body and environment
(www.gettyimages.com)*

condition of the present context. Through feedback, we begin to learn the patterns of how different objects behave under certain conditions. We thus form a continuous feedback loop, learning from our experience of our surroundings. This feedback can either reinforce what we know to be true, or it can challenge this perception and thus appear threatening.

“All experiences in life, especially experiences of movement and settlement in three-dimensional space, are dependent on the unique form of the ever-present body. It appears that, individuals possess an unconscious and changing image of their bodies which is quite separate from what they know objectively and quantifiably about their physicality. If we can understand more about how we acquire and modify this psychic image of our own bodies, we may possibly obtain a better grasp of the way in which we perceive objects and settings around us” (Kent C Bloomer & Charles W Moore 1977:37).

There is a constant interaction between body and environment, an evolving relationship defining the extents and condition of our personal occupation of space in any given moment. We build up a mental image of how our body appears to the outside world and we attach a certain value to this perception. In this respect, our world mirrors our image of self.

The way people respond to us or treat us informs us of what we are projecting to those around us. Based on the outcome of an individual's experience with another person, he or she may re-evaluate his or her body image. When rape or abuse occurs, this feedback tears down this vital image of self. Thus a person's 'psychic image' of his or her body is misinformed and from the misperception, he or she draws negative and self-destructive conclusions about his or her own body. A victim of rape or abuse loses sight of his or her ordered world and suffers a loss of identity. The victim is therefore violated both physically and psychologically. The survivor will embark on a journey of rediscovering or restructuring his or her body image, identity or 'self'.

A woman's face is shown in profile, with the left side (viewer's left) covered in white paint. A paintbrush is applying orange-brown paint to the right side of her face, which is already partially painted. The background is a solid, muted brown color.

**WE HELP PEOPLE
TO GET THEIR
IDENTITY BACK.**

More than 25,000 people got their faces back.
We can do more. Help us, make your donation
to the community of San Patrignano.
www.sanpatignano.it

SanPatrignano.

Rediscovering Identity
(www.foundshit.com)



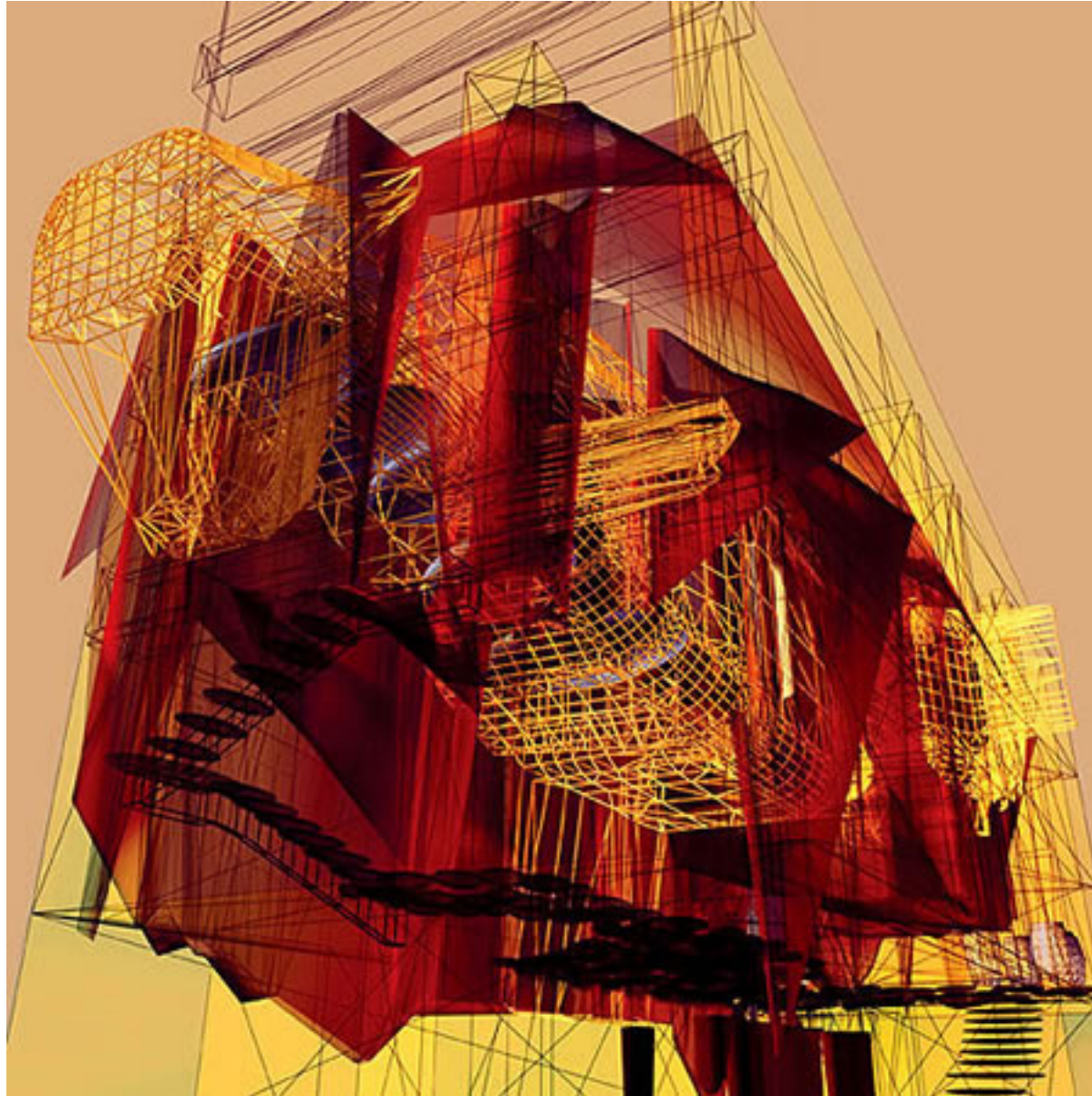
Searching for Identity
(www.k-punk.abstractdynamics.org)

Architecture and Identity

By creating spaces that are harsh and unreceptive to the victims of rape and abuse, we isolate these people and prevent them from engaging with what is a critical process in their recovery. Unfortunately, so many of our governmental health institutions and police stations are cold and harsh to our senses, both in appearance and in the way victims are dealt with. For this reason, so many rape cases go unreported due to the resultant secondary trauma experienced by rape and abuse victims. In this context, I agree with Pallasmaa when he says, “Our institutions are impersonal systems: the activities of everyday life take place outside the workings of our senses and beyond our understanding” (Encounters 2005: 79).

The clean and slick forms of architecture of this century are often removed from the human experience since they offer only an impoverished setting for humanity to draw meaning and associations from their presence. The fact that people’s behavior is dependent on their environment is a key principle in creating conditions that encourage a process of healing and positive reinforcement.

“The interdependence of identity and context is so strong that psychologists speak of a ‘situational personality’. The notion has been conceived on the basis of the observation that the behavior of an individual varies more under different conditions than the behavior of different individuals under the same conditions” (Pallasmaa, Encounters 2005:118).



Building shaped around the body
(www.interactivearchitecture.org)



Villa Mairea
(www.scandinaviandesign.com)



Villa Mairea
(www.artnet.com)



Villa Mairea
(www.in-between.org.uk)



Villa Mairea
(www.kultureflash.net)

A rare example of how the architectural dimension of a building and the personal, private dimension of life have been integrated exists in Alvar Alto's 'Ville Mairea', which was made possible through the close relationship between architect and client. As Pallasmaa describes it, "Villa Mairea is archaic and modern, rustic and elegant, regional and universal at the same time. It refers simultaneously to the past and the future; it is abundant in its imagery and, consequently, provides ample soil for individual psyche attachment" (Pallasmaa, Encounters 2005:114).

According to Pallasmaa, "As designers, we act within the limits of our intellectual and cognitive powers, but as residents and users of the environments we react with our whole personalities. To this extent we may then find ourselves denying our own creations" (Pallasmaa, Encounters 2005:74). It is important to design spaces as if we were the end user. In this way, we create buildings shaped around our own bodies and the rituals we perform. By providing spaces that arouse our senses and speak to something within us, we begin to establish ideas and images relating to these spaces. Space can serve as a generator of thought, self-reflection and meditation. It has the potential to induce a balanced mental state. It may provide the environment in which we feel adequately protected in order to deal with the unwanted thoughts of the rape and abuse.



Finding echoes in the body
(www.fashionindie.com)



Projection of the body pattern
(www.fandreacote.com)

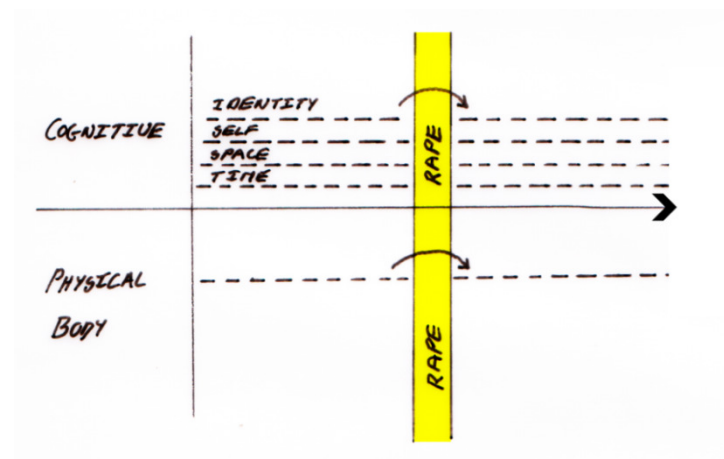
We are yet to understand fully, the importance of environment for our personalities and psyches. “A properly organized environment – full of significance, finding echoes in the measurements of our body, and in the memories of our minds – expresses our relationship with the world, but at the same time reinforces our self-identity” (Pallasmaa: Encounters 2005: 76). Juvenile delinquency, for instance, is understood to be a result of a lack of stimuli in the child’s environment as opposed to an underlying criminal mind. The child compensates for the limits placed on his or her freedom by committing acts of rebellion.

Buildings that are visually appealing may simultaneously provoke emotions of rejection based on the angularity and harshness of their form. “In an environmental experience, there is an unconscious bodily identification with the object, a projection of the body pattern onto what is experienced, or a physical mimesis, an unconscious mimicry,” (Pallasmaa, Encounters 2005: 114). If we are unable to attach our body pattern to a building, we begin to feel detached and alienated.

“In my view, architecture can either tolerate and encourage personalization or stifle it. There is an architecture of accommodation and an architecture of rejection. The first one facilitates reconciliation, the second attempts to impose by its untouchable order. The first is based on images that are deeply rooted in our common memory, that is, in the phenomenologically authentic ground of architecture. The second manipulates images, striking and fashionable, perhaps, but which do not incorporate the personal identity, memories and dreams of the inhabitant. The second attitude may create architecturally more imposing houses, but the first provides the condition of homecoming” (Pallasmaa, Encounters 2005: 124).



Memory
(www.ucdavismagazine.ucdavis.edu)



The Schism
(Author's own)



Walking through time
(www.distilennui.com)

The Space Time Continuum

As much as we experience space, we experience time. The two are interconnected and we need reassurance of our own existence as it pertains to the present as well as to the continuity of time. The experience of continuity is a fundamental psychological necessity, arising from one's fear of death. In other words, humans are continually searching to establish their relevance in the world at any given moment. We need to feel that we have significance and that our lives are worthy of attention. For a rape victim it is vital that they are reminded of their significance as a human being and the inherent value they carry for the very reason that they are an individual human being. Architecture must aid humankind's existence by affirming one's sense of safety and continuity.

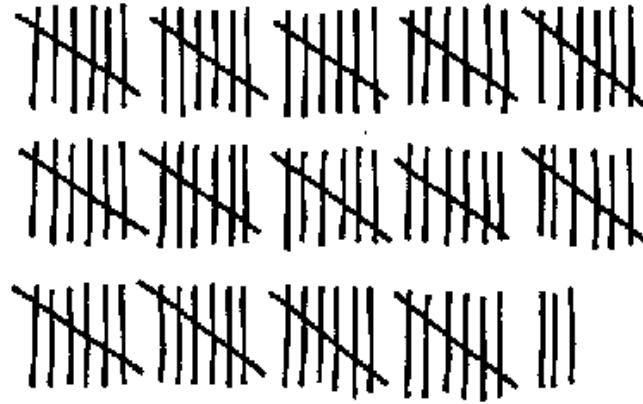
From our inner experience of architecture, we form mental images, which establish our perception of its properties. Our perception can be influenced and pre-conceived based on previous experiences of space, since we are continuously drawing associations from different points in space and time. A person then begins to define a continuum of space and time which ultimately becomes their life story, held within their own minds. This gives us a greater understanding of our inner space and thus, the more we interact with our environment and the more we use our sensory mechanisms, the deeper the connections and the stronger the associations made with all that we encounter.



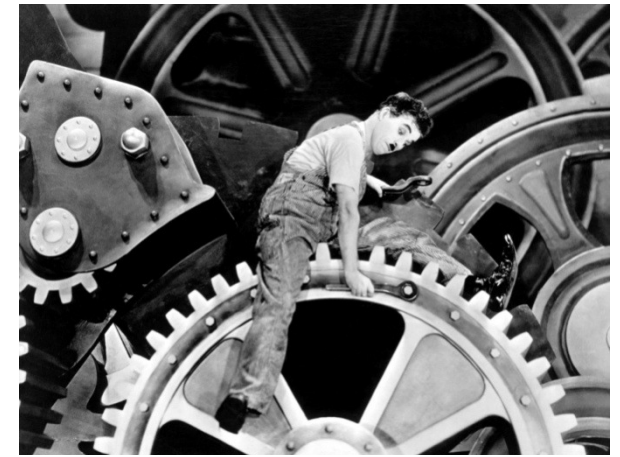
'Persistence of Memory' by Salvador Dalí
(www.artinthepicture.com)



Leaving a mark
(www.iaacblog.com)



Counting down
(www.ilivingarchitecturecentre.com)



Time goes by
(www.tarvine.blogspot.com)

In life, we are continually locating ourselves along a path through time. When a person is raped or abused, it is as if the victim's personal path disappears and his or her sense of continuity is lost. It is important that this break in time, space and self be transcended so that the victim's sense of continuity is stitched back together. This is an individual's journey, and it is the intention of the CCC to house and positively shape this experience through architecture. In this instance, architecture seeks to bridge the traumatic experience through establishing processes of healing and offering a place of protection. It will provide the sensory stimuli that will spark the memory of a victim's primal sense of safety. The experience of the CCC will lead the victim to the necessary primal encounters, which will appeal to his or her feelings of refuge and security. It is from this place that we can begin to re-construct a victim's life story. Architecture is no longer about the object formed but the process generated. The CCC must appeal to our idea of safety through the senses by offering images and rituals, which lead the victim along a path to re-forming a functional image of self.



Body as house
(www.scott-c.blogspot.com)



The private realm
(www.house_sketch BLOG.com)



Embodying the house
(www.cnr.edu.com)

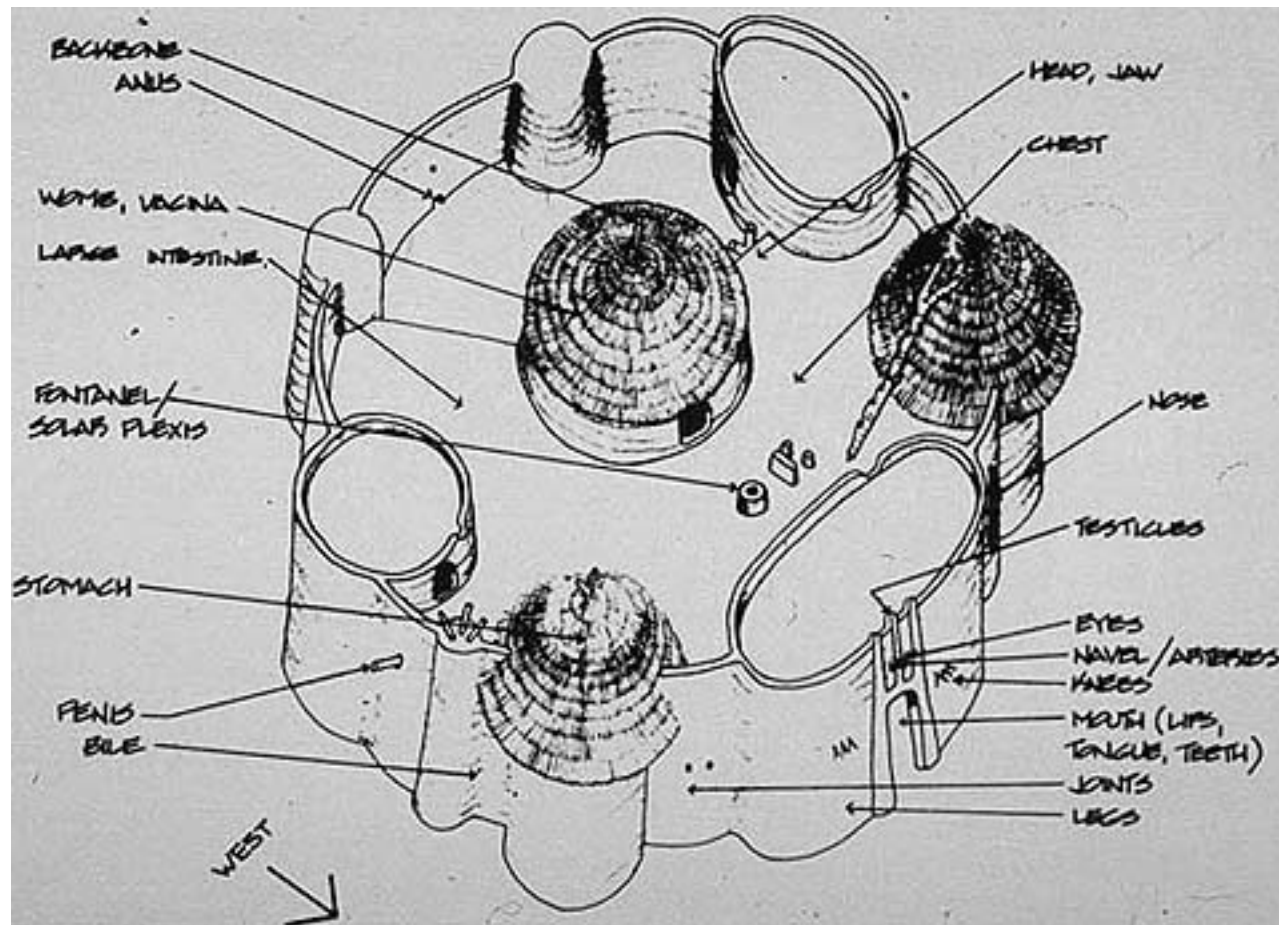
Body, House and Tradition

A house in many respects may be likened to the organizational structure of the body and represents a boundary that distinguishes the public from the private realm. The windows of the house constitute our eyes to the outside world. The door becomes the mouth, opening up to receive visitors from its surrounds.

Anthropomorphism is the incorporation of proportional and symmetrical systems, based upon the human body, in the design of buildings. When describing buildings, we often refer to gender (male and female) and human body parts, for example the 'skin' of the building or the 'heart (hearth)' of the design. Other body parts used in describing buildings include: the womb, the underbelly, head, feet, eyes, mouth, finger, and so on.

"Indigenous building grows unconsciously out of landscape, soil, climate, materials, and type of culture. Just as a bird shapes its nest with its own body, so the organic community shapes its habitat with its collective memory. Tradition is a centripetal force that prevents both the committing of errors and individual divergences. Through tradition, the overall interaction between physical conditions, a way of life and psychological needs are developed towards a balance. Building converts the community's cosmological view of the world into physical reality" (Pallasmaa, Encounters 2005:73).

One can learn from the creation of space through tradition in that it is a result of a continued process of informed construction. Traditional building is something that is always being added to as new lessons arise from interacting with and understanding a building. In Batammaliba architecture, anthropomorphism is one of the core principles in the design and fabrication of buildings, for the house is like a human. The Batammaliba live in the border region between the West African nation states of Togo and Benin Republic.





Shaped around the body
(www.primaleye creations.com)

"In arranging forms to define the human, Batammaliba architects turn to themselves and in the process also incorporate their own and their culture's distinctive self-view. Through this predominantly human model, Batammaliba buildings serve in turn as central symbols and structuring elements of local psychoanalytic and therapeutic processes. The house is perceived to be an integral part of the family, and through it the psychological well being of each member is defined and in part maintained"
(Suzanne Preston Blier 1987:119).

In the same way, the CCC will provide the setting for a common ground amongst rape survivors. This becomes a family, a unit of support, which is represented by the building that contains it. The building is, however, not only a skin to hold the bodily functions, the therapeutic processes, but provides the setting for a sequence of encounters between person and building which lead to the eventual physical and psychological recovery of the victims.

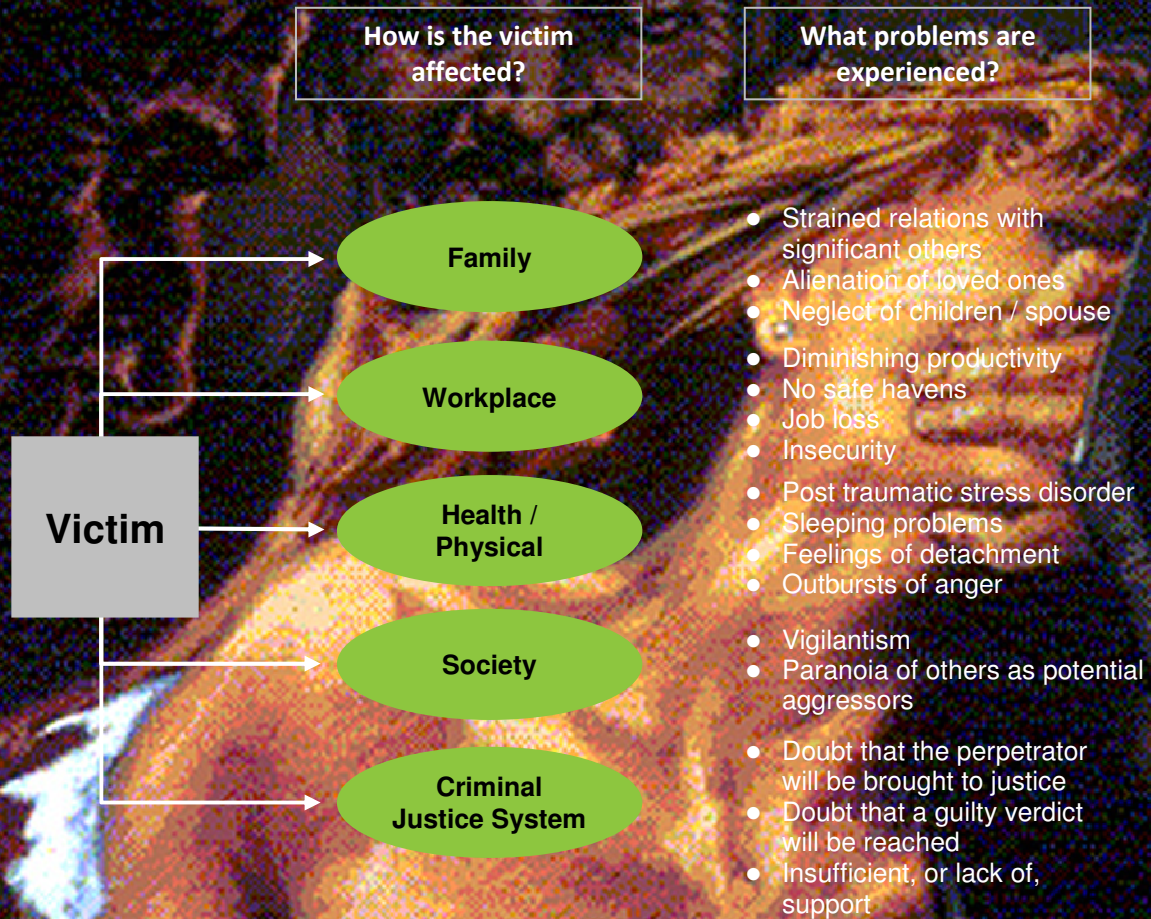
Through interacting with the built form, we form relationships with it, which evolve through time. This relationship is unique to each individual as each person interprets a building through his or her own sensory mechanisms in his or her own particular way. We interpret images and messages intrinsic to the built form, using the senses to decipher what the building is communicating. This means that a building has the potential to spark our memory and bring about a certain psychological state. Thus, our intellectual interpretation of a building is based on our bodily experience of the building. This develops into a continual synthesis of body, mind and architecture. Cognizance must therefore be paid to how buildings that are shaped around the body lead to architecture that may better influence psychoanalytic and therapeutic processes.

3 WHEN TIME STANDS STILL



'The rape of the daughters of Leucippus' by Peter Rubens
(www.artchive.com)

The context: Rape is complex and has a wide impact in society ...



Note: Adapted from *Generic Post Traumatic Stress Analysis* (Vogelman, 1992)

The devastation of rape
(www.scrapetv.com)



Isolation
(www.deviantart.com)

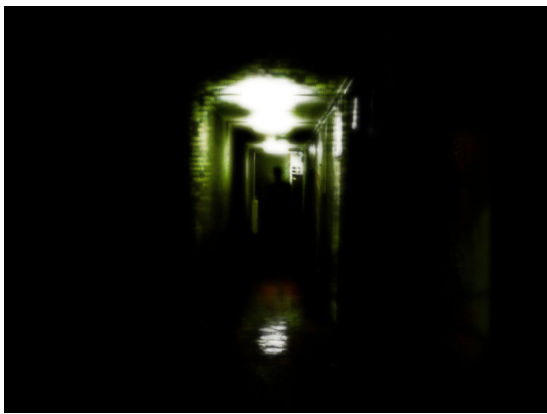
The Post Rape Experience

While in Durban earlier in the year, I met with Jessica Foord, a rape survivor. She was brutally gang raped by five men who accosted her and her father while they were walking their dogs at the Polo Dam in Hillcrest. The men tied her father to a tree and then forced him to watch while they raped his daughter. Her post rape account is as follows:

“There is not one centre for people to go to directly after a rape has occurred. I was met by a care worker who took my statement. From there I went to the local police station and then received my rape kit. The police were not very caring and one in particular told me she was tired and wanted to go home. Once I had got my case number and rape kit I was sent into the middle of Pinetown to a closed clinic (behind a taxi rank) at about 8pm, where I waited for about 45 minutes for the District Surgeon to arrive. Once he had opened the clinic I was taken to an examination room where I was not even given a gown to put on, and I was poked and prodded (which was almost worse than the rape itself). The District Surgeon also showed no sympathy at all. He forgot to put the blood sample back into the rape kit and so I had to remind him. There was no stock of the Morning-after-Pill at the clinic or TB meds. From there we had to go to a doctor. Luckily for me my family all put money into an account so I could go to a private doctor for ARV’s and so forth. Most people have to go to a Government Hospital and can wait days in queues for their medication. From the time of the incident to the time you go home is such a long process as everything is done at different premises. I was raped at 2.30pm and I got home at 11.45pm. If all this could be done under one roof, it could cut the time down tremendously and reduce the trauma” (Jessica Foord 2009).



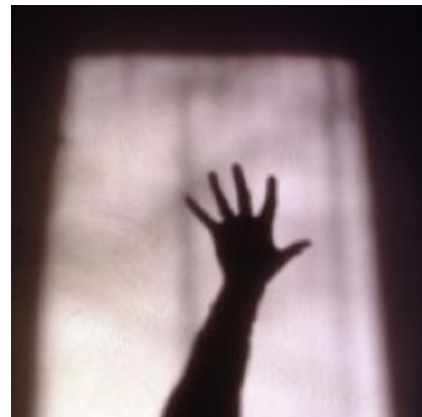
Desecrated
(www.2.bp.blogspot.com)



Lost and confused
(www.deviantart.com)



A lonely walk
(www.deviantart.com)




Reaching out
(www.southafricaproject.org)



Victimized
(www.all4women.co.za)

“Very often after a rape has happened, people will say things such as, ‘It’s over now, you must get on with the rest of your life or they will not understand that six months after the rape has happened the survivor is still suffering from the effects of the rape. This is because rape only begins with the physical act, during which, every part of the victim is concentrated on surviving. After the assault, the struggle to comprehend what has happened begins. Its meaning floods over the survivor and she has got to find the way to return to her life, her body and her ‘self’. Rape is as much a destruction of ‘self’ as it is an act of physical invasion. The battle between this ‘mind-rape’ and the woman’s will to find her ‘self’ again is what we call survival” (www.rapecrisis.org.za).

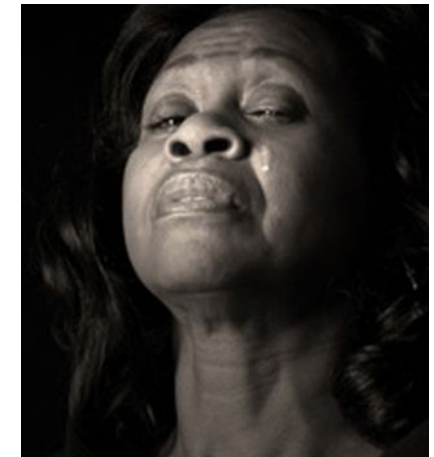
Rape trauma syndrome is a medical condition often experienced by victims of rape. It is a form of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and can have long lasting effects on the survivor. As a result, survivors often experience increased levels of fear and anxiety. They tend to blame themselves while feeling an immense amount of guilt. A feeling of helplessness and being out of control as well as humiliation and shame, plague the survivors. Their self-esteem is crushed and they feel dirty. Survivors are often overcome by anger and feel alone, as if no one understands them. They feel numb and emotionally unresponsive and therefore lose hope in their future. Confusion and loss of memory is common, yet they persistently think about the rape, continually having flashbacks as if experiencing the incident all over again. Nightmares prevent them from getting the sleep that they need. Depression ultimately sets in and survivors can become suicidal. It is important to clarify that when referring to ‘rape victims’ one is not referring only to women but also children and men.



683,000 forcible rapes
occur every year, which
equals 56,916 per month,
1,871 per day, 78 per hour,
and 1.3 per minute.



Silenced
(www.muktadhara.net)



Traumatized
(www.salemnews.com)

"It is important that we recognize that survivors will not respond in the same ways. While most survivors will experience these symptoms, some survivors may only experience a few of these symptoms, while others may experience none at all. We must be careful not to judge whether someone has been raped by the number of symptoms that they display. Because most survivors are afraid to tell anyone that they have been raped, it is important that we treat anyone who says they have been raped as if they have" (www.rapecrisis.org.za).

The system must provide all the support that is necessary for the victim to become a survivor. Gail Abarbenel, a clinical social worker, has found that almost all rape survivors suffer from severe and long lasting emotional trauma. Various factors play a role in causing these symptoms. Among them is the fact that the rape is sudden and perceived as life threatening. One of the reasons for the act is to impede the survivor's physical integrity and thus cause them to feel helpless.

The survivor is forced to participate in the crime since they are unable to prevent or control the assault. Their normal strategies for coping failed them and thus they become subject to the rage and aggression of the perpetrator. The initial trauma is often compounded by myths, prejudice and stigma that go hand in hand with rape. These can have dire consequences if the people with whom the survivor has contact, reinforce the sense of shame and guilt already present in the survivor's mind (Above information is adapted from www.rapecrisis.org.za). For these reasons, it is essential that all medical, legal and police proceedings are done in a way that eliminates the secondary trauma experienced by rape survivors.

Jessica Foord stated, "When you are raped the perpetrator claims your body. You can't stop that – but your spirit, courage and personality aren't taken away...I have a choice if I want to be a victim or not. When I get up in the morning, I have to decide whether the day will be mine or others'."

4 A PLACE OF RESTORATION



"In order to design buildings with a sensuous connection to life, one must think in a way that goes far beyond form and construction."

Peter Zumthor

*Stimulation of the senses
(Author's own)*



A Japanese courtyard
(www.japanese-art.net)

Healing Through the Senses

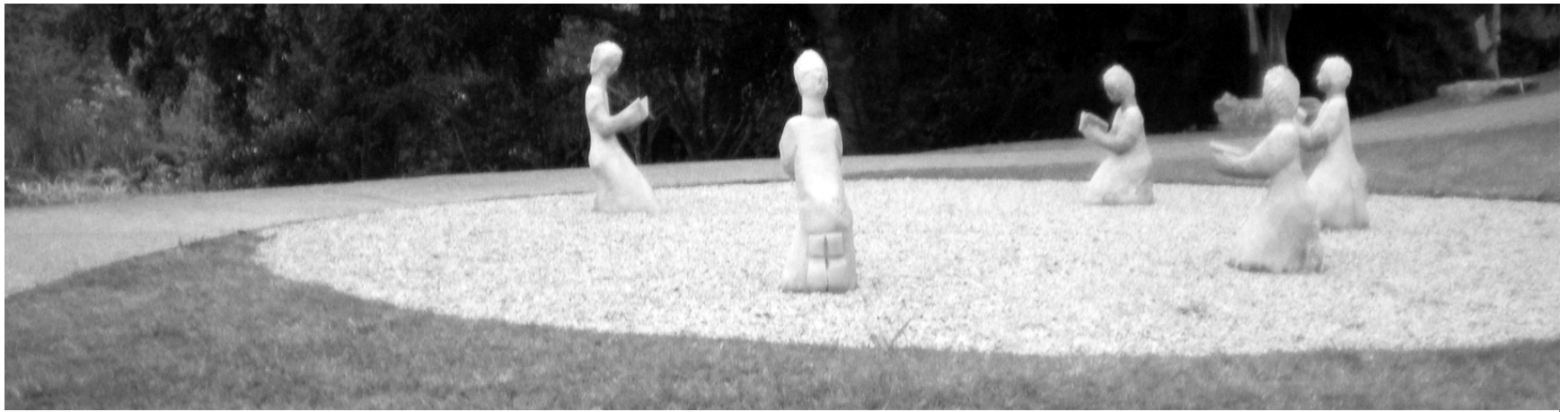
At the centre of architectural endeavour stands the human body, the internal landscape that is defined by a permeable membrane and is thus subject to external forces. I believe that as an architect, it is imperative to lay claim to the senses that establish our psychoanalytical understanding of life and the spaces with which we interact. This motive aims to reconnect humankind with its environment, to establish buildings that evoke the sense of being humanly receptive.

Our experience of an environment is always reliant upon the various senses. In my opinion, one of the flaws of current architecture is its emphasis on the visual quality of a building, denying emotions, which may be evoked through other sensory interactions. The degree of intensity and the tranquility of a setting can be attributed to the fact that one is using all of one's senses in that moment. This is evident in the Japanese garden, where elements are carefully arranged to instill a sense of harmony.

In her book, 'Gardening the Japanese Way', Sima Eliovson explains that, "The intention behind the creation of every ordinary Japanese garden is to provide tranquility so that the people of the house can obtain peace of mind and can escape from the strains of living in the contemplation of nature." (1971:171) Victims of rape and abuse will be overcome by the chaos of their experience and what is required is a setting, which will bring forth a feeling of balance and serenity which I intend to create by introducing anchoring elements to the space.



Losing touch with reality
(www.dannydaily.typepad.com)



*Point of reflection
(Author's own)*

It is essential that the victim's sense of existence is affirmed considering that he or she will have lost his or her connection with reality. As Pallasmaa expresses, it is the continuous stimulation of the senses that provides a process of healing:

*"A walk through a forest is invigorating and healing due to the constant interaction of all the sense modalities; Bachelard speaks of 'the polyphony of the senses'. The eye collaborates with the body and the other senses. One's sense of reality is strengthened and articulated by this constant interaction."
(Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin* 2005: 41)*

By creating an awareness of an individual's place in the world, the spaces generated at the CCC will begin to affirm one's sense of self. It is important that the victims begin to assess their existence, to make the discovery that a destiny lies ahead for them to fulfill. "Architecture strengthens the existential experience, one's sense of being in the world, and this is essentially a strengthened experience of self" (Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin* 2005: 41). Thereafter it is fundamental that a victim's self-identity be reinforced while interacting with the environment created within the CCC. "An architectural space touches something deep and familiar in us", says Pallasmaa (*Encounters* 2005: 75). It is when we find reflections of ourselves in space that we begin to be reminded of who we are and what we mean in the given circumstances.

*"To at least some extent every real place can be remembered, partly because it is unique, but partly because it has affected our bodies and generated enough associations to hold it in our personal worlds," say Kent Bloomer and Charles Moore in their book *Body, Memory and Architecture* (1977:107).*

They further express that the lack of this sensory interaction with one's environment has led to an impoverished experience of space. They write, "What is missing from our dwellings today are the potential transactions between body, imagination, and environment" (Kent C Bloomer & Charles W Moore 1977:105).

5 A JOURNEY OF HEALING



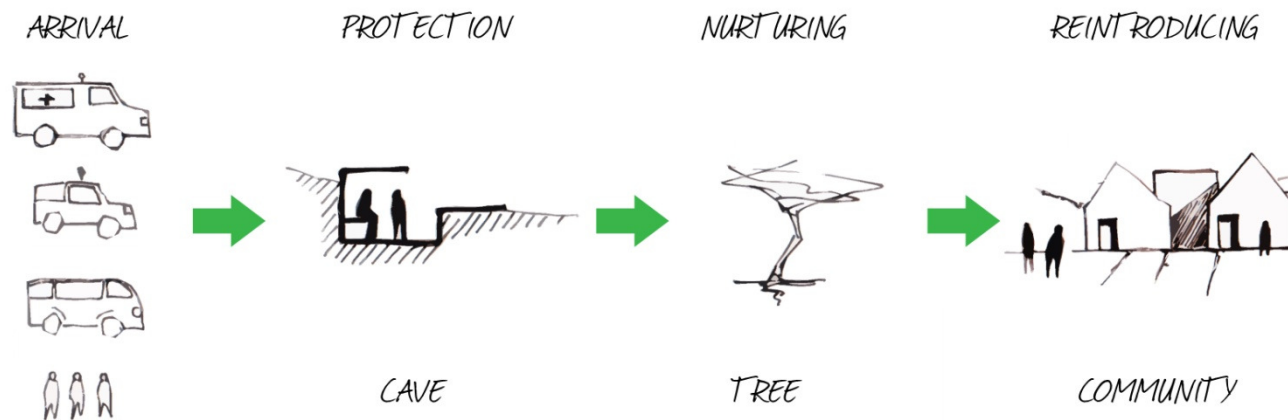
(Author's own)

"In many lives it is the beginnings that are most significant: the first steps, though seemingly effaced, leave their imprint on everything else that follows."

Lewis Mumford, American philosopher, writer, social commentator and architectural critic (Thamm 1998:9).



The first steps
(www.deboisgallery.com)



*From Cave to Tree to Landscape
(Author's own)*



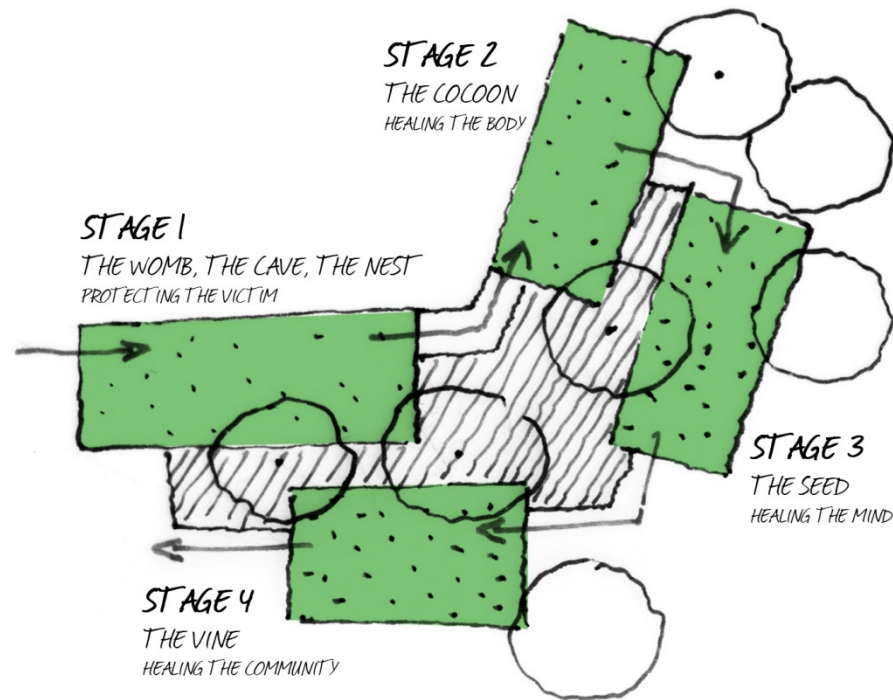
*Unfolding journey
(Author's own)*

The CCC must provide the opportunity or the ground upon which a victim's personal journey of recovery can unfold. Each victim's experience and needs will be different and one cannot seek to design a facility for each case that comes in. "Every woman will have her own way of dealing with a rape. Some will want to withdraw, others will want to talk. Let her do it her way". (Thamm 1998:267) I do however propose that one can accommodate each case by meeting the universal needs of victims. The CCC is therefore not aimed at appealing to any particular race or religion. It offers the opportunity for each victim to encounter and utilize the CCC in his or her own way. The CCC is not just about the facilities it provides but the way each victim forms a dialogue with the building.

Space must be provided that is suitable for victims who are in need of a more solitary, protected experience while also offering communal areas for fellow survivors and therapists to engage in a more open form of therapy. The needs of the victim will evolve as one progresses through the stages of recovery. Victims will need different aspects of the building at different times. The building in this sense is not static but is able to adapt to the evolving needs of the victim. The life of the CCC is therefore constantly shifting and adapting to suit each victim while subtly leading them along a defined path to recovery.

The function of the CCC can be understood as having four arms of intervention, each of which will hold relevance at different stages of the process of dealing with, recovery from and prevention of rape and abuse. The four stages are 'The Womb, the Cave, the Nest'; 'The Cocoon, Healing the Body'; 'The Seed, Healing the Mind'; and 'The Vine, Healing the Community'. The first stage of the process is 'The Womb, the Cave, the Nest' which deals with the immediate trauma of rape and abuse by providing the victim with a space of safety and security and removes him/her from perceived danger. The CCC must be understood as a series of encounters between the individual and building, which provides a sense of refuge and protection.

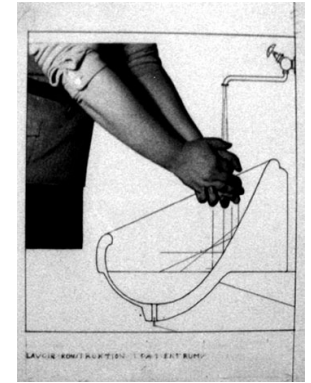
The second stage of the CCC is 'The Cocoon, the Healing of the Body' which will come into effect after the victim has been stabilized. This facet of the CCC offers the site for a continued process of healing the body and for the patient returning to the CCC for follow up treatment and advice.



Phases of the Journey
(Author's own)



Support network
(www.mf.co.za)



Personalizing home
(www.designboom.com)

The third stage of the CCC is 'The Seed, the Healing of the Mind' and provides a supportive structure for the victim, their family members and friends (his or her support base). This is vital in that one needs to direct the victim's support base as to how they can help their loved one through his or her crisis. Often the people who are closest to the victim bear the trauma of the experience as much as the victim does. "Families of rape survivors often feel helpless and this comes across in their behavior towards the survivor" (Thamm 1998:267). It is important that the victim's support base is strong for the duration of his or her recovery. This part of the journey allows the victim to explore life beyond the rape and begin to re-construct a sense of self, identity and order. This is where the victim starts to become the survivor, where he or she is equipped and empowered to carry on with life.

The fourth stage of the CCC is 'The Vine, Healing the Community' and functions as the mediator between the survivor and their community. Here the survivor is reintegrated into public life. This part of the building seeks to embrace the community through pro-active outreach programs. As a means to bring survivors and their community together, expressive arts are used to create a common ground for interaction. The so called expressive arts will include painting and crafts, sculpture and dance. Instead of the CCC being merely about the response to rape, it must also be about the prevention of rape and equipping the community with the skills needed to effectively deal with the issue at hand.

The CCC thus becomes the vessel through which specific needs are systematically addressed through the process of a journey. The people inhabiting the CCC bring to the structure, the shell, or the nest, a personal aspect, making it a home for survivors of rape and abuse. According to Pallasmaa, the home is "an expression of the dweller's personality and his or her unique patterns of life. Consequently, the essence of home is closer to life itself than to artefact of the house" (Encounters 2005:114). The establishment of a family of rape survivors and activists is the home which carries with it personal expressions to the world around it. There is a dialectical relationship between the victim and the spaces they inhabit so that the connection between the two is constantly redefined by the personal and communal journeys of the victims. 'Home' in this context must not be understood as something personalized by each survivor but rather a space shared by all survivors of rape and abuse, offering them a place of safety and a network of support.



The womb
(www.commonswikimedia.org)

*The cave (Bruder Klaus chapel in Mechernich,
Germany by Peter Zumthor)
(www.archide.wordpress.com)*



*The nest
(www.gettyimages.com)*



*Our corner of the world
(web.missouri.edu)*

Stage 1 The Womb, the Cave, the Nest

The first stage of encounter between the victim and the building is what I've termed 'the Womb, the Cave, the Nest'. One does not want to isolate the victim from the public realm completely following the trauma but it is necessary to make manifest a tangible enclosure, a womb or cave like structure, providing the vulnerable victim with the perception of protection from prevalent danger. The CCC will function as a house in the sense that it will form a boundary behind which victims can retreat as well as from where the victim can return as a survivor to their community. The house is perhaps our most primal of spaces. It carries with it notions of being a nest, a sanctuary, a place of protection which takes us back to the beginning of our very existence as human beings. There remains the instinctive need to make a home for one's self, to establish a space to which you belong and from which you can draw self-referential images. These images of self are what help to cement our perception of ourselves, located within a vast and diverse world. Bachelard writes, "For our house is our corner of the world...It is our first universe, a real cosmos in every sense of the word. The house is one of the greatest powers of integration for thought, memories and dreams of mankind" (1969:4, 6).

The role of the CCC must be to establish a fresh approach to what a home is, since the victim perhaps does not have an understanding of what a functional home is and has perhaps just arrived from one that has done nothing but deliver abuse. The idea of home speaks of something that is more personal in the approach to dealing with victims. This notion does not rely simply on the physical properties of the facility but also the rituals and rhythms of the people who engage with it.

"The home is a staging of personal memory, a complex mediator between intimacy and public life. Personal space expresses the personality to the outside world, but equally importantly, personal space strengthens the dweller's self-image and concretizes his world order" (Pallasmaa, Encounters 2005:116).



Shattered Lives
(www.theroadtothehorizon.org)



Broken State
(www.gettyimages.com)



Protective enclosure
(www.archithink.blogspot.com)

The victims of rape and abuse will be arriving at the CCC in a broken state, devoid of a sense of safety and refuge. Their personal space and their inner space have been desecrated and thus they will feel threatened when entering at a place that is unknown, one that they do not necessarily view as being safe. The CCC must be an environment that affirms notions of protection and security.

In receiving new victims, the architecture forms a secure enclosure which in a sense hides the victim away from the outside world, removing them from the threatening environment from where they have just come. A stone retaining wall defines a curve which delineates and embraces the casualty section of the building with its strong and secure presence. It also serves to lead the newly arriving victim into the admissions space.



The Cocoon
(www.suekayton.com)



Protective membrane
(www.mocoloco.com)



Process of recovery
(www.gettyimages.com)



J88 Form
(TCC)



Recovery of the body
(www.fatherjoe.wordpress.com)

Stage 2 The Cocoon, Healing the Body

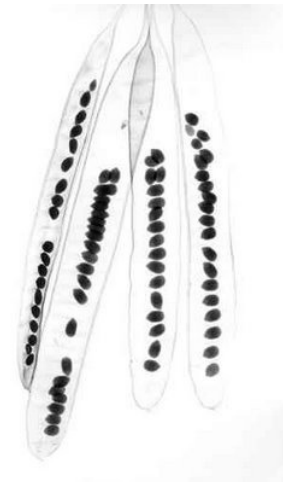
The second stage of the victim's journey is what I've termed 'the Cocoon, Healing the Body'. A space is fixed yet its significance to each individual that interacts with it is continuously changing and evolving. Therefore the architecture of the CCC should not be about product but about a process of re-connecting one with self. The self has to be restored and at the same time be re-evaluated in light of the trauma. For those who have had a sense of continuity and balance prior to the incident, the CCC offers the victim the chance to re-establish this order in his or her life. For those who have only known an abusive environment, the CCC offers the victim a chance at achieving a new life.

I want to evoke a sense of safety that can be interpreted by each victim. Architecture is both permanent and transient. It is permanent in that it occupies a fixed space in time but transient in the sense that it only comes into being at the interface between the architectural product and the subject that inhabits, interacts with and interprets it. Therefore, architecture is less of a product than it is a site of process. The CCC, through its anchoring elements, will initiate a dialogue with each victim, which will immediately appeal to his or her sense of safety and refuge. Once this dialogue is introduced, the victim will then have the freedom to respond to the space in an idiosyncratic way. I want to evoke a sense of safety without necessarily dictating the specific interaction a victim has with the CCC. In this way, the CCC is different for each victim and is constantly being re-defined by each victim's process of recovery.

Once the victim has been assessed and the necessary treatment and documentation has been completed, he or she is then taken through to the second phase of the journey. At this point focus is given to the physical recovery of the patient and more practical steps are taken in treating the victim. Here the building would appear to wrap around the victim, in a sense creating a cocoon to nurture the victim. The cocoon is a space of transition and change. At this point in the process an analogy of metamorphosis exists which can be applied to both the architecture and the victim as they both begin to transform, be that literally or metaphorically. The image of the cocoon speaks of something which wraps around or covers with a protective membrane, offering nourishment to the life within. This part of the journey is exactly this. It is about nurturing and tending to the physical needs of the victim. It is important that the victim's physical strength be attended to before he or she can commence the healing of the mind.



A space of the mind
(www.nicholas-endean.blogspot.com.)



The seed
(www.mrsblandings.blogspot.com)



Overwhelmed
(www.gutenberg-e.org)

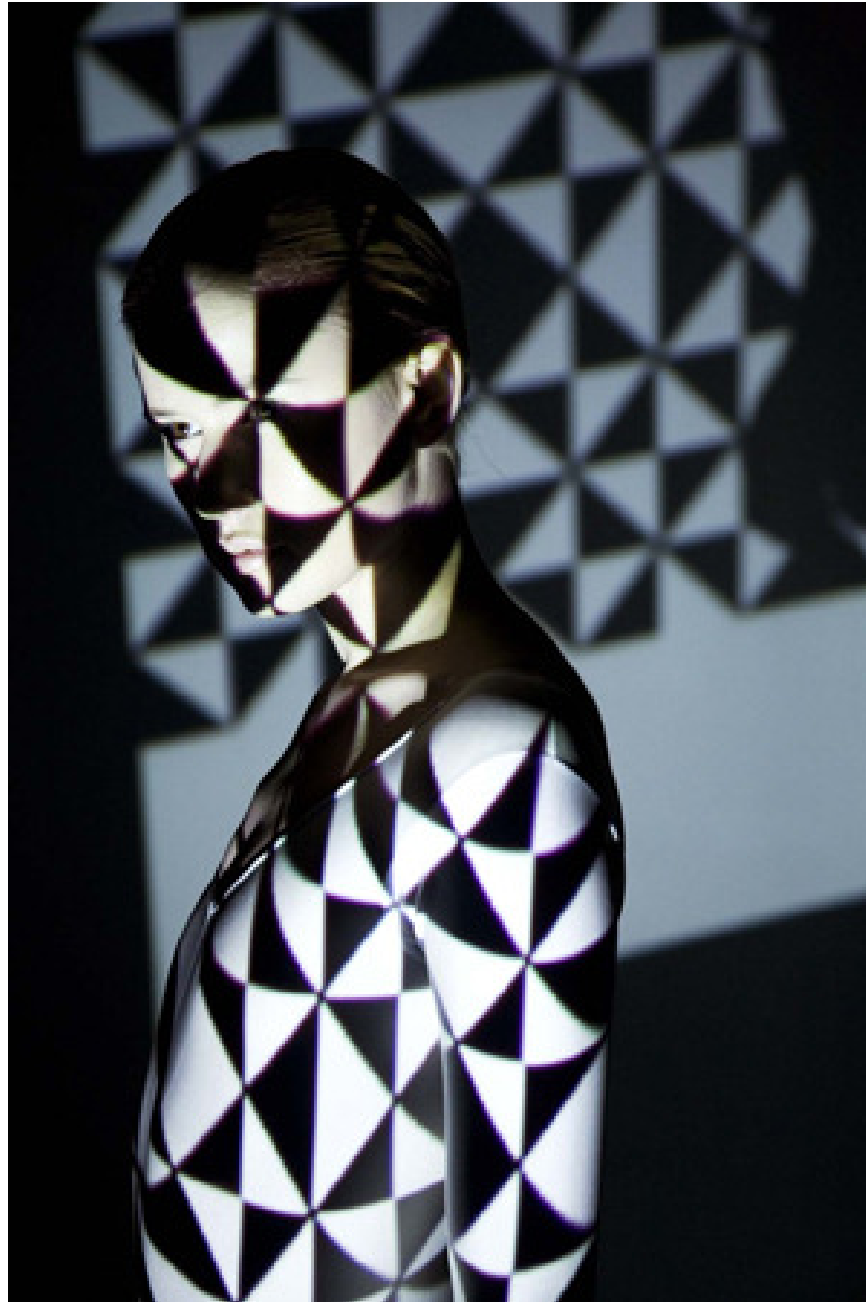
3 The Seed, Healing the Mind

The third stage of the victim's journey is 'the Seed, Healing the Mind'. It is essential to instill balance and order in the minds of the victims who are in a state of turmoil. The victim's world has just been turned on its head and he or she will be confused and overwhelmed by what they are experiencing. The role of architecture in this case is to provide a setting rich in possibilities for mental attachment and stabilization.

"We build dwellings that, perhaps, satisfy most of our physical needs, but which do not house our mind" (Pallasmaa Encounters 2005, 114). As much as rape is a physical invasion it is also an infringement on one's psychic state. A place of restoration must therefore be a place which caters for the healing of the mind. "A reflection on the essence of home takes us away from the physical properties of a house, into the psychic territory of the mind. We engage issues of identity and memory, consciousness as well as unconscious, biologically motivated behavioral remnants as well as culturally conditioned reactions and values" (Pallasmaa Encounters 2005, 115).

Attention must be given to offering adequate facilities within the CCC for the attachment of the psyche. Such facilities are constituted by anchoring archetypes which provide points of access into the journey of healing. The use of these archetypes will be elaborated upon later in this section. By offering spaces which are shaped by the needs of the victims and respond to the victim's mind at specific points in the recovery process, the CCC will establish an environment where the patient will feel more at ease.

These spaces seek to embrace, to nurture and to encourage by evolving in its degree of permeability as the victim draws closer to a full reintegration into the community.



Piecing back together 'The Self'
(www.futurefashionkingston.org)



The house of the mind
(www.sensingarchitecture.com)

"In his book, 'Poetics of Space', Gaston Bachelard discusses the essence of the oneiric house, the house of the mind. He is undecided about the number of floors of this archetypal house; it has either three or four floors. But what is essential to its existence is the attic and the cellar. The attic is a symbolic container for cherished memories while the cellar becomes a lock-away chest of unpleasant memories. It is important to have both within the oneiric house since they are needed for our mental well-being" (Pallasmaa, Encounters 2005: 114).

What we can take from Bachelard is that there must be spaces held within the CCC where one may discard bad memories and others where positive one's may be restored and retained. The purging process is initiated through the encounters between the victim and the CCC and carried to its culmination in the scared space and pebble pond. This creates an opportunity for symbolic severing of trauma. The restorative process is also initiated through the encounters between the victim and the CCC and reaches its culmination in the archetypal structures within the CCC. These form a dialogue with the victim which offers meaning and understanding and is experienced predominantly as the victim ventures in, through and out of "The Seed" and begins to explore the landscape. This subtle exposure to the community is how the CCC endeavours to gradually reintegrate the victim into the community, which is restorative in itself by bringing the victim to the public realm where there is further healing through the collective as he or she engages in expressive arts in the community centre. Therefore, the victim's various encounters with the CCC are characterized by a simultaneous process of purging and restoration or reconstruction in which he or she will appropriate the aspects of these experiences which best facilitate the process of recovery.

"The characteristics of the oneiric house are culturally conditioned, but the image also seems to reflect universal constants of the human mind. Modern architecture has forcefully attempted to avoid or eliminate this oneiric image. Consequently, it is not surprising that Modern Man's rejection of history has been accompanied by the rejection of psychic memory attached to primal images. The obsession with newness, the non-traditional and the unforeseen has wiped away the image of the house from our soul" (Pallasmaa, Encounters 2005: 114).



A natural anchor
(www.blog.photoshelter.com)



Japanese courtyard garden
(www.johnandwanda.com)



Fire
(www.homedesignfind.com)

The envisioned facility will consist of a series of encounters with specific anchoring elements. These elements or archetypes will host rituals connected with the response to and the recovery from rape. Such envisioned anchoring elements include the courtyard, the fire, the tree, the path, the stream and the pond. Each holds significance and meaning in piecing back together a healthy image of self. By providing elements or archetypes around which the daily processes of the CCC take place, positive associations can be drawn from these activities by the victims. These positive references to the facility help the victims in their attitude towards their recovery process.

Courtyard gardens will act as central focal points around which the CCC is arranged. The concept of the courtyard is to create an inward focus, directing the attention of the user towards the inner space, which is created to instill a sense of balance and ensure a constant interaction between the victim and the landscape.

The fire acts as an informal and communal area for sharing. The concept is to encourage people to express their emotions or confide in one another after having been through similar ordeals. Fire exudes a feeling of warmth and security and is a life-giving energy.

The significance of hearth or stove for the senses of home is self-evident. The image of fire in the home combines the most archaic with the most present. The power of the symbolism of the hearth is based on its capacity to fuse archaic images of the life supporting fire of the primitive, experiences of personal comfort and symbols of togetherness and social status" (Pallasmaa, Encounters 2005:121).

A tree is a natural anchor for holding gatherings. Often one can see in rural settings, daily functions which happen around the foot of a tree. It is a symbol of protection as if an umbrella that wards off the sometimes harsh sunlight of life. The tree symbolizes growth, regeneration and life. The roots can be understood metaphorically as a foundation upon which victims can begin to build a new life or undertake a new journey.

Lake Fundudzi in Limpopo province

"The Vhavenda people use Lake Fundudzi in Limpopo province for cleansing rituals and ceremonies, mythical and cultural purposes. It is also believed by the Zion Christian Church or ZCC, that the water in this lake has healing properties".

Written by Lesego Madumo, Tuesday, 03 February 2009
www.joburg.org.za



Place of gathering
(www.1st-art-gallery.com)



The umbrella
(www.panoramio.com)



The path (Bruder Klaus chapel in Mechernich, Germany by Peter Zumthor)
 (www.archide.wordpress.com)



Cleansing Waters
 (www.teenink.com)

The path is the place for a journey to be made. There are two types of paths: the direct and ritualistic, and the recreational. There is a continuity of paths both inside and outside the buildings which provide the patient with a constant experience of the relationship between the buildings and the landscape. This allows the patient to freely permeate the buildings while continually relating to the courtyard spaces. Even though the entire facility is about a journey of restoration, the path generates the image of one searching for meaning in a bizarre set of circumstances. The patient will also get the sense that this path has been traversed by others who have gone before. With this comes a notion of inspiration, of hope, that if someone else has survived this experience it is possible to overcome such circumstances.

The stream is the life giving source, the water wells up and supplies a constant flow of nourishment. Water can also be understood as having a cleansing quality where the victim is submersed beneath its surface and thereafter re-emerges as a new person. This can be likened to the biblical significance of water where baptism signified entering into a new life.

The pond is the place to discard bad memories and where negativity can be purged. With each pebble tossed into the catchment, an emotion of perhaps anger, pain or desperation is carried with it. This becomes a way of parting with images that are ultimately harmful to the victim and replacing them with an experience, which holds positive meaning and significance.

The seed, the place for the healing of the mind is where the victim starts to take hold of the notion of being a survivor. This is perhaps the most crucial stage in the entire process as the victim opens up to a new beginning where they can rediscover a sense of self. The architecture at this point speaks of this in the way the roof is progressively peeled away as one moves closer to the sacred space and the community centre. The building is also gradually stepped towards the sacred space which subtly encourages the survivor to move in the direction of the community.



Connections and growth through vines
(www.ullam.typepad.com)



Generating a community
(www.life.com)

4 The Vine, Healing the Community

The fourth stage of the victim's journey is 'The Vine, healing the Community'.

"Symptoms are intolerable precisely because they are meaningless. Almost any difficulty can be borne if we can discern its meaning. It is meaninglessness which is the greatest threat to humanity", says psychologist Edward Edinger (Encounters 2005:80).

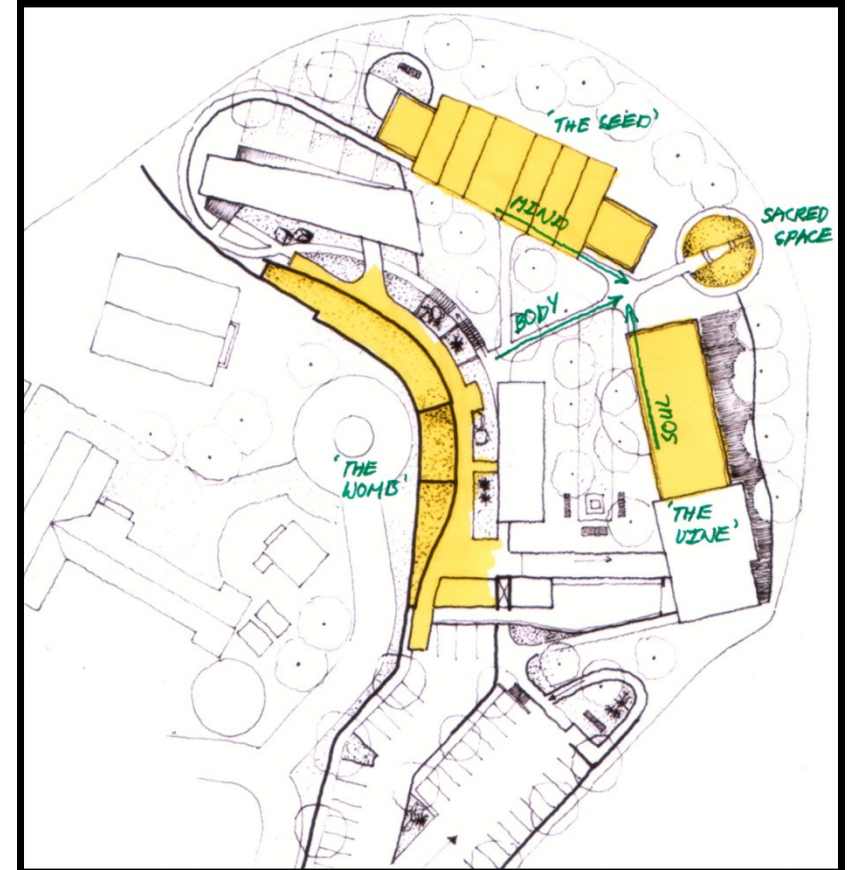
This declaration holds great significance in that the CCC should offer the victim the opportunity to find meaning in his or her experience, meaning that ultimately positively shapes their lives. The key here is generating a community that is not defined by rape and abuse, but one that is identified by its willingness to help and restore people who arrive in a broken state.

I believe that a space is needed where rape survivors can make fundamental links between self and environment, to reconnect them with their community. When a victim is violated to the extent of losing self-respect, dignity and value, they are in need of a facility that will remind them of their significance within this life. The victim needs to understand that he or she can function successfully in the world again without carrying a victim mentality through the rest of his or her life.

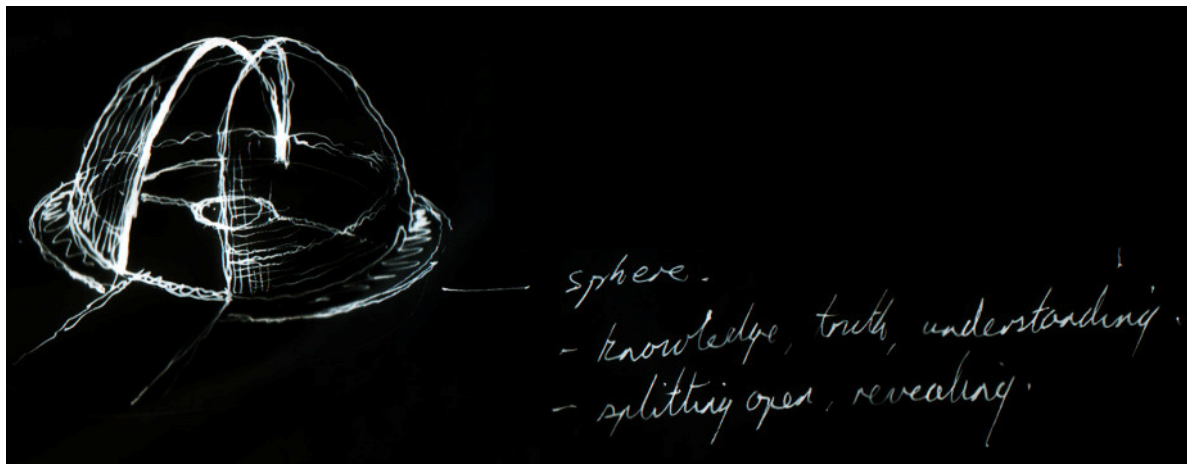
The community or the landscape is the point of integration between the private realm of the CCC and the public realm of the community. The architecture is therefore about permeability as it opens up to receive people from the surrounding area. This openness is expressed in the treatment of the façade as it folds away to reveal what lies within. This transparency throughout the building creates security in the form of surveillance and provides an important symbol that this facility is not just about the initial, pragmatic processing of rape victims but rather a comprehensive experience whereby the victim is taken from a broken state and to one in which he or she is reconnected with his or her self and those around him or her.



*Unique dome-shaped stone corbelled houses
(Saturday Star Newspaper, 26 September 2009)*



*Body, mind and soul in the sacred space
(Author's own)*



Sketch of the Sacred Space
(Author's own)

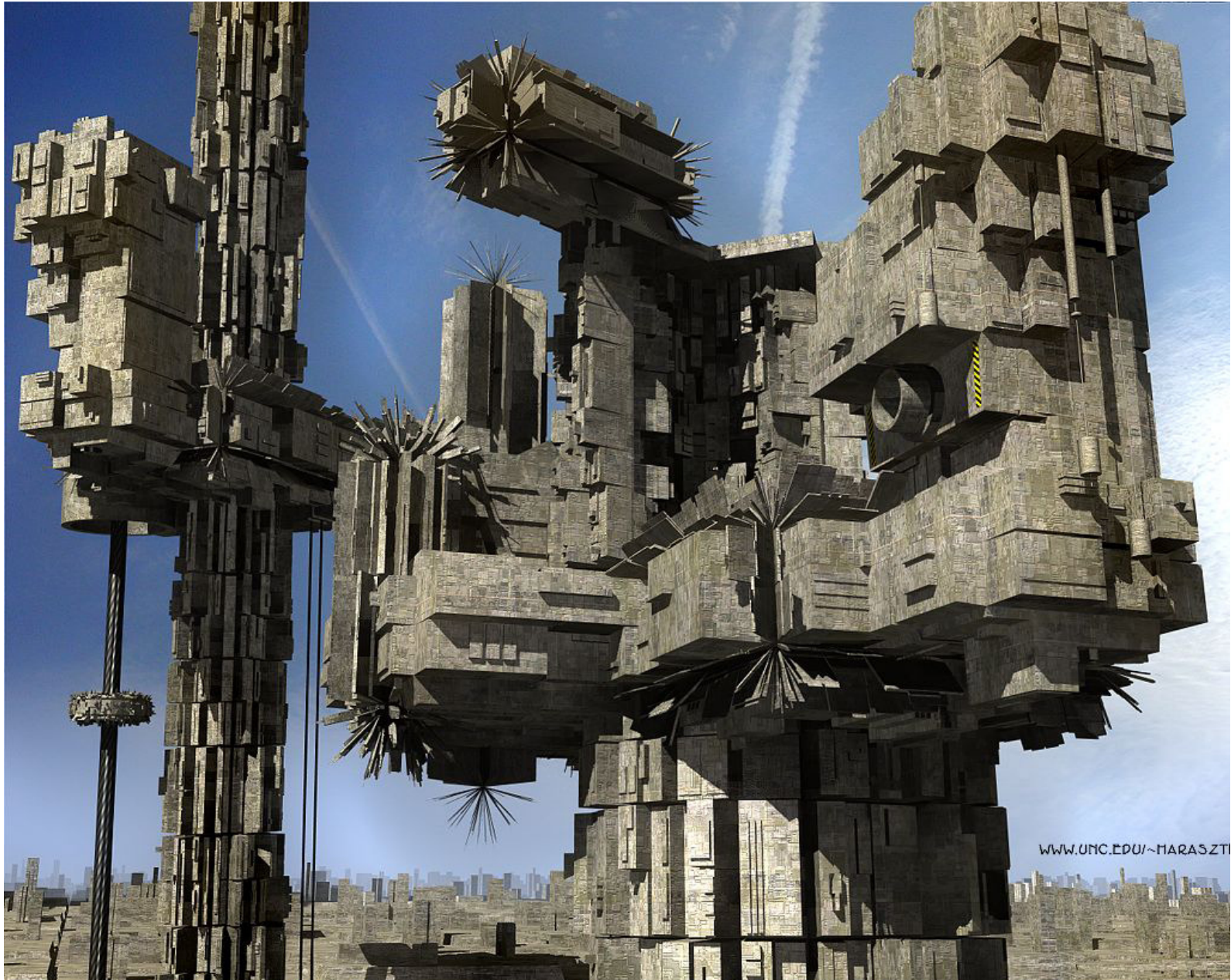


Introspection
(www.submitresponse.co.uk)

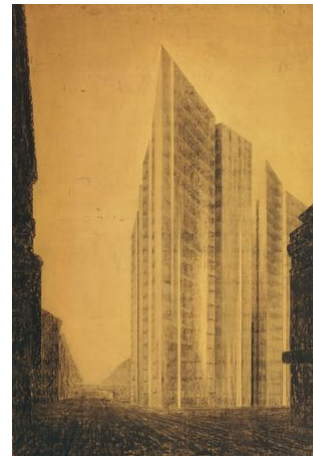
The Sacred Space

The sacred space is the culmination of a three way relationship that plays out within the complex. Three paths converge on a pre-entry zone to the sacred space. These paths represent the elements which constitute a complete recovery, that being of the 'mind'; 'the body' and 'the soul'. The path that represents the body originates from 'The Womb, the cave, and the nest'; the path that represents the mind extends from 'The Seed' and the path that symbolizes the soul is generated through the community centre or 'The Vine'. The meeting of these three elements results in a space of reflection which becomes a point of departure for each survivor to discard the pain associated with their experience. The sacred space is a dome shape which is split along the centre, running from a narrow gap from the back to a larger opening in the front. This form is an image of revealing truth and understanding through reflection as if splitting open the source to one's answers.

6 HEALING A PERSON, HEALING A NATION



Alienating architecture
(www.thingsmagazine.net)



Cold detachment
(www.deliciousghost.com)



Harsh Environment
(www.i.thisislondon.co.uk)

Detachment from the human experience has led to architecture, which has become lifeless in that man cannot draw reference from the abstracted manifestations held by a multitude of city centres. “Building in our industrial age lacks emotional substance, because it no longer provides images for our minds or nourishment for our dreams” (Pallasmaa, *Encounters* 2005:80). The goal of the architect is to understand the psychological state of his client so as to respond to this condition with his arsenal of tools gathered through his or her personal experience of the effect of space on the human psyche.

*“In a specialist society, building is controlled largely by conscious and specialized views of the building trade. Although regulated by man’s intellectual and cognitive powers – or rather limitations – the constructed building is actually mainly experienced emotionally, sensuously, and thus unconsciously. Designs implement ideal models and concrete images of order, which in turn offer only an impoverished and inhuman environment. Such building lacks the unity of thinking, action, and experience characteristic of traditional communities” (Pallasmaa, *Encounters* 2005:74).*

Through understanding the psyche of the client, the architect begins to approach the design, as the end user would experience it. The challenge for the architect is to create an experience, which positively affects the mental and physical interaction between user and product. In this way, architecture can be understood as an organic entity, which takes on different roles through time.



Reconciliation of the self and architecture
(www.designboom.com)



*Paimio chair by Alvar Aalto
(www.designboom.com)*

It is not a fixed expression, which remains as a still work of aesthetics but is rather, something which breathes life. The life of the building is therefore encountered by a person's inner landscape, which then sets forth a complex process of environmental response within the human body. In his description of a piece of furniture, Alvar Aalto's preoccupation with the detailed effects of this item upon the human condition can be seen.

"A piece of furniture that forms a part of a person's daily habitat should not cause excessive glare from light reflection: ditto, it should not be disadvantageous in terms of sound, sound absorption, etc. A piece that comes into the most intimate contact with man, as a chair does, shouldn't be constructed of materials that are excessively good conductors of heat" (Alvar Aalto & Goran Schildt 1978:48).

This demonstrates an architect's endeavour to address the finest details of the task at hand. The same extent of response must be shown in understanding the needs of the rape victim.

*"In memorable experiences of architecture, space, matter and time fuse into one singular dimension, into the basic substance of being, that penetrates our consciousness. We identify ourselves with this space, this place, this moment, and these dimensions become ingredients of our very existence. Architecture is the art of reconciliation between us and the world, and this mediation takes place through the senses" (Pallasmaa, *the Eyes of the Skin* 2005:72).*



The Mind's Eye
(www.images-0.redbubble.net)



The eye of the imagination
(www.2.bp.blogspot.com)

As Pallasmaa so emphatically declares, it is through the senses that humankind will find significance within its continued state of being. Perhaps if we were all to expose our senses to the world around us we would perceive and learn from our experiences in ways that we never thought possible. Our rapid, technologically advanced society has lead to people missing the finer details. Perhaps one of the most striking experiences today is that of mere silence.

In stopping to feel, to engage, we begin to understand ourselves as well as those around us. The old saying of 'stop and smell the roses', captures the very essence of what man lacks in today's world. It is time to stop, to take cognizance of what is happening to people around us, to find meaning by helping those that are in dire need of our attention.

For rape and abuse victims, this time is no more pressing than now. The problem of rape calls for drastic change and implementation. It requires a paradigm shift, a new way of perceiving and understanding the problem at hand and the needs of people affected by this terrible crime. Humankind, through space, can make manifest the ground required for change. Let architects begin to think about and view the world from the mind's eye of the people for which they are designing. Healthy space is conducive to healthy people. Healthy people are the key to a healthy community. Shape one person's space and you shape a nation.

7 CURRENT CONDITIONS



At present, there is a dire need for the appropriate infrastructure and management of rape centres throughout the country. A rape happens every 17 seconds in South Africa and it is said that one in every two women are raped. Standing shoulder to shoulder, one could make a line from Durban to Johannesburg and back with women who had been raped in one year. According to the SAPS reported figures, although rape statistics have decreased over the past five years, the number of incidents per year is still out of control. Apart from Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal has the highest reported rape statistics in the country. Whereas Gauteng has seen a gradual drop in incidents, KwaZulu-Natal has been subjected to an escalation in the number of rape cases. Furthermore to this the reported figures do not account for unreported cases.

There are two rape and abuse centres situated North and South of Durban, as well as one in the inner city at Addington Hospital and another at King George V Hospital. The centre to the North is a newly developed facility at Mahatma Gandhi Hospital. The other centre to the south of Durban is situated at Prince Mshiyeni Hospital, in Umlazi. The latter is an existing structure that has been designated as the rape and abuse centre.

Addington Hospital and King George V Hospital carry centres, which are more immediate to the central parts of Durban. The crisis centre at Addington has a vital role to play within the inner city, whereas King George V Hospital is situated at a critical point within Durban's residential sector, serving a large percentage of the greater Durban population.



*Exterior view
(Author's own)*



*Interior view
(Author's own)*

King George V Crisis Centre

The facility at King George V Hospital is a small afterthought, latched onto the side of the main hospital building. It is small and airless with tiny, prison-like windows. There is no privacy, the ablutions are inadequate and no thought is given to the comfort of the victims. As it stands, victims on arrival have to walk through the triage section of the hospital to reach the CCC and would thus witness the trauma cases in progress, only adding to the secondary trauma often experienced by victims in current facilities. There has been no consideration for the healing process beyond the necessary medico-legal and Aids related therapies. The facility is cold, clinical and threatening. As rape is a breach of one's personal space, poorly designed buildings do not promote healing and are an infringement on a community's environment.

“This process ensures that service providers are available to a rape survivor in one location, rather than her being shuttled around throughout the criminal justice system”, says Advocate Thoko Majokweni, Head of the SOCA unit.



(Thuthuzela brochure)

The Thuthuzela Care Centre Model

The Thuthuzela Care Centres operate out of public hospitals in communities where rape is rampant. The centre's are linked to sexual offenses courts, staffed by prosecutors, social workers, investigating officers, magistrates, health professionals, NGO's and police. These centres are situated close to the courts. The centres are run by a team of top level professionals consisting of, "Justice, Health, Education, Treasury, Correctional Services, Safety and Security, Local Government, Home Affairs, Social Development and designated civil society organizations". (Thuthuzela Brochure 2009) Central to the way Thuthuzela Care Centres operate is an ethos of, "respect, comfort, restoring dignity and ensuring justice for children, women and men who are victims of sexual violence". (Thuthuzela Brochure 2009)

The process of treating each victim is crucial in developing an environment which offers the virtues set forth by the Thuthuzela model. The process described by the Thuthuzela model is one which can be implemented very successfully. After visiting the two Thuthuzela centres in KwaZulu-Natal, it has become evident how the right intentions can be stunted by a lack of resources and bureaucratic bungling. The right process combined with an architecture which is conceived upon fulfilling its intentions will result in a journey which is able to provide the victim with the treatment described within the Thuthuzela's approach to rape care.



*Victim friendly waiting rooms at courts
(Thuthuzela brochure)*

Services offered at the Thuthuzela Care Centres (TCCs)

- Welcome and comfort from a site co-ordinator or nurse.
- An explanation of how the medical examination will be conducted and what clothing might be taken for evidence.
- A consent form to sign that allows the doctor to conduct the medical examination.
- A nurse in the examination room.
- After the medical examination, there are bath or shower facilities for the victims to use.
- An investigation officer will interview the survivor and take his/her statement.
- A social worker or nurse will offer counselling.
- A nurse arranges for follow-up visits, treatment and medication for Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), HIV and AIDS.
- A referral letter or appointment will be made for long-term counselling.
- The victim (survivor) is offered transportation home by an ambulance or the investigating officer.
- Arrangements for the survivor to go to a place of safety, if necessary.
- A consultation with a specialist prosecutor before the case goes to court.
- Court preparation by a victim assistant officer.
- An explanation of the outcome and update of the trial process by a case manager.

The Thuthuzela Strategy for treating a victim

The following would take place at the first stage of the overall journey through the CCC. This is therefore contained within what I have called 'The Womb, The Cave, and The Nest'.

"When reporting the rape, the victim is removed from crowds and intimidating environments, such as at the police station, to a more victim-friendly environment before being transported by ambulance to the Thuthuzela one stop care centre at the hospital. Enroute, the victim receives comfort and crisis counseling from a trained ambulance volunteer. Once at the Thuthuzela *Care Centre*, the victim is ushered to a quiet, private space, welcomed by the site-coordinator. A doctor is immediately summoned to conduct a medical examination. The victim is then given Information on the procedures to be performed. The victim (patient) signs a consent form for the medical examination and blood specimens, if the medical examination happens within 24 hours of the rape. The victim is offered the opportunity to take a bath or shower and to change into clean clothes. The investigating officer on call at the centre takes the victim's statement. Thereafter, the victim receives the appropriate medication and is given a follow-up date for further medical treatment, before being transported home. When reporting, the rape victim is removed from crowds and intimidating environments, such as at the police station, to a more victim-friendly environment before being transported by ambulance to the Thuthuzela one stop care centre at the hospital. Enroute, the victim receives comfort and crisis counselling from a trained ambulance volunteer". (Thuthuzela brochure 2009)



Distressed child
(www.southafrica-pig.blogspot.com)



(Thuthuzela brochure)

Creating a Child Friendly Environment

According to Doctors at Thuthuzela Care Centres there has recently been an increase in the numbers of child victims. Consequently, there is a need for nurses or care givers who are specially trained in receiving and comforting children before they are taken for examination.

Effort has been made to make Thuthuzela centers child-friendly. Added to this, special analysis tools have been installed which include, two way mirrors, posters, drawings and anatomically correct dolls. This helps to prepare children for their appearance in court.



"The word 'comfort' awakens feelings of warmth, freedom from emotional and physical concerns, safety, security, being pampered and cared for and, above all, re-inforcing dignity, hope and positive expectation. These attributes and feelings which are embodied in 'thuthuzela', the Xhosa word for comfort, are realised in the establishment of the Thuthuzela Care Centres".

(Thuthuzela Brochure 2009)



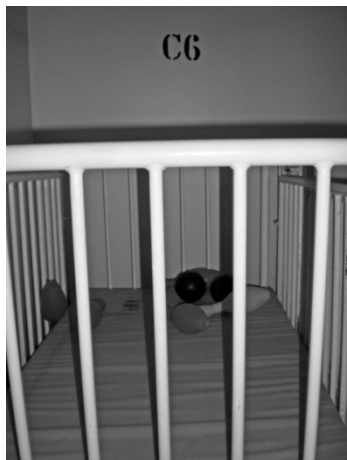
Collecting evidence
(www.poyi.org)

There are two Thuthuzela Care Centres (TCC) in Kwa-Zulu Natal. The one situated at Prince Mshiyeni Hospital and the other at Mahatma Ghandi Hospital. I have visited both facilities and seen the present structures that are in place in order to evaluate what can be done to enhance the service they are providing for victims of rape and abuse as well as the community at large. It must be said that I am not intending this investigation to be a quantitative assessment but rather a qualitative assessment of current facilities.

The Ethekwini district contains fifty percent of the Kwa-Zulu Natal population. The two TCCs are the busiest of the five rape and abuse centres in the province. The Prince Mshiyeni TCC receives approximately one hundred and fifty cases per month while the Mahatma Ghandi TCC receives around one hundred and thirty cases per month. The victims in sixty percent of these cases are children.



Prison-like entrance
(Author's own)



*Children's ward
(Author's own)*



*Adults' ward
(Author's own)*



*Police counter
(Author's own)*



*Nurse's station
(Author's own)*

Prince Mshiyeni TCC

On arrival at the hospital gates, one is directed to follow the road around to the far back end of the hospital. One is then taken through a long cold corridor to a security gate that does nothing but make one feel unwelcome. As one enters the crisis centre, one is immediately confronted by the SAPS office where they take statements from the victim. This is not the compassionate greeting a victim needs on arrival at the crisis centre. Before being seen to, one is taken through to the waiting area, which consists of a mere two wooden benches. The nurses' station is centrally located and exposed to the circulation of victims, police and doctors. The first impression one gets is that the centre has been neglected and is very basic.

There is an attempt to bring natural lighting into the building along the central corridor running through the facility however the overall quality is dull and depressive. The space is not utilized effectively. There is no thought given to the arrangement of the spaces according to the process associated with dealing with rape. The current Doctor's rooms double up as medical examination rooms and they are severely cramped. The ward has no privacy. The perpetrator is brought on site through a separate entrance however at times he or she is taken into the waiting area to have their height and weight recorded. The examination room for the perpetrator is separated from the ward with a glass wall. It is not screened off properly from the ward as the blinds are in disrepair and therefore patients have a visual of the perpetrator being examined.

Dr Vajjnah Mohammed is the head of the crisis centre and is doing a remarkable job with limited resources. She is inspiring in her dedication to improving the situation however she is hampered by a lack of support and understanding from the Department of Health. Despite this lack of adequate support from the government, and the inefficient facilities, Dr Mohammed and her staff are able to provide the community they serve with an effective treatment of rape and abuse. However the staff are overworked and are often put into dangerous situations while dealing with drunken or drugged perpetrators. The effectiveness of such a facility is mostly dependent on the people who run it and by improving the environment in which these people operate one may drastically improve the service that they provide to the community.



Entrance
(Author's own)



*Reception
(Author's own)*



*Waiting area in corridor
(Author's own)*



*Sexual assault kits
(Author's own)*



*Examination room interior
(Author's own)*

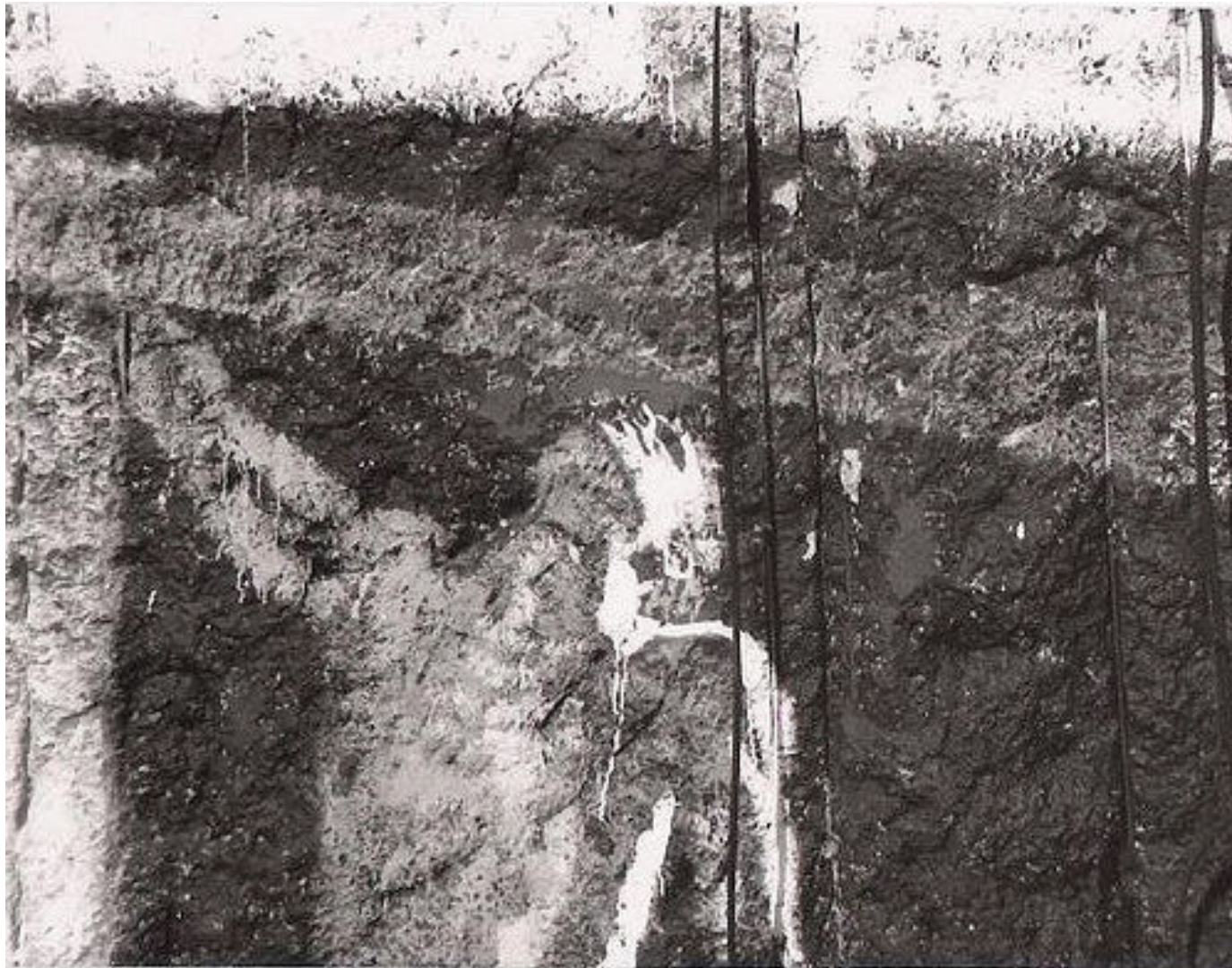
Mahatma Gandhi TCC

The care centre at Mahatma Gandhi in comparison to the Prince Mshiyeni care centre is far more uplifting upon entering the building. Dr Shikaar Bagwandeem heads up the care centre and is highly motivated and committed to the work he is doing. This can be seen in the way he and his staff work effectively in providing the most secure, comforting and pro-active service to the community that the present facilities permit. He said, "It is a soul thing. The medical side is important but there needs to be some other kind of driving force". Dr Bagwandeem expressed his despair at the Department of Health's lack of management and stated that it is a national crisis.

The centre is housed in a new building, which was sponsored by the Sibaya Casino in Durban. Despite being built for the purpose of being a care centre, the facility is cramped and lacks the space required for all the functions associated with such a building. For this reason the staff are forced to make use of the old pre-fabricated building in which the care centre was originally housed.

The care centre is located close to the main entrance to the hospital and is easily distinguishable as it is a self-standing building. The reception is bright and friendly and the staff bring to the building a warm and compassionate quality. As soon as one enters the centre, one is immediately attended to by either a nurse or the site coordinator. The layout of the rooms is structured in a logical sequence, each having access to natural lighting and ventilation. The waiting area is perhaps too exposed to the public eye as it forms part of the reception area. It would be better if there were a more secluded area where patients and family or friends may wait to be attended to.

A challenge with all rape and abuse centre's is the need to bring the perpetrator on site for a medical examination. This procedure in this case is carried out in the old pre-fabricated building which also hosts the psychologist's room and one of the examination rooms. Even though the staff does their best to keep the victim and perpetrator separate, there have been occasions where the two have crossed paths. The care centre has a typical 'clinical feel' about it which is something I am trying to steer away from. Effort has been made to add colour to the building using furniture and wall murals. However these appear to be inconsistent due to a lack of funding.



Barrier
(www.flickr.com)



Searching for hope
(www.gettyimages.com)

Common Challenges

There are a number of common needs and challenges that apply to all the facilities, some of which are described here. A designated outside space is needed for victims and family to get fresh air and perhaps for therapy sessions to take place. Dr Bagwandeem said that it is important that the centre not be located next to the casualty but that it should rather be detached from the main hospital building. Both TCCs display a lack of consideration of the local climate in their designs and thus the spaces are extremely hot in summer and cold in winter.

Dr Mohammed added that King George V would serve as an ideal location to run the CCC considering its central location. Her view is that there cannot be any rigidity in the planning since each case is different and therefore the centre must provide options for the patients.

Prosecution is a huge problem in South Africa. Court cases take a very long time, sometimes up to five or six years to be processed. Dr Bagwandeem stated that a specialized medico-legal techniques room, which is equipped with all the necessary equipment for the examination and documentation of rape and abuse cases, is required. This is for the fast and effective delivery of scientific knowledge to the court for the sentencing of perpetrators. He also said that it would be beneficial to have a room set aside for research on rape and abuse cases to improve the way in which they are dealt with.

A rising problem amongst all the centres is the lack of social workers. We are losing social workers to other countries because of the poor remuneration. What a social worker would earn in one hour in England, a social worker in South Africa would be fortunate to earn in one week.

Another problem due to the lack of funding is that there are inadequate facilities for providing refreshments to victims, who often go without food or drink for hours, and insufficient accommodation facilities that do not provide victims with the care and security that they so desperately need.